



## SENEGAL NATIONAL CONSULTATION REPORT

The Senegal National Consultation on the Istanbul Program of Action and the SDGs was held in Dakar on March 22, 2018. It was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning as well as from the Ministry of Trade. More than 40 members of leading civil society organizations were also present.

### I) Opening Ceremony

During the opening ceremony, Demba Moussa Dembélé, Chair of ARCADE, the host organization, and LDC Watch President, welcomed participants to the Consultation. He explained the context in which it was being held and its main objectives. He reminded participants about the West African Regional Consultation, held in Dakar, in June 2017, with the presence of all West African LDCs and the LDC Watch Global Coordinator, Mister Gauri Pradhan, and the Advocacy, Campaign and Research Officer, Ms. Rushka Sthapit.

Mister Dembele gave some background information on LDC Watch, since its launch in Brussels (Belgium), during the Third UN Conference on LDCs (UN LDC-III) in 2001. Since then, LDC Watch has developed into a full-fledged international network, with affiliates in all LDCs in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean (Haiti). It has become the leading voice for the advocacy of LDCs' issues at the United Nations and with other inter international organizations.

He highlighted LDC Watch role during the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (UN LDC-IV) in Istanbul (Turkey), during which LDC Watch organized the very successful Civil Society Forum, which brought together more than 400 representatives of CSOs from around the world.

After that introduction on LDC Watch, Mister Dembele explained the importance and objectives of the National Consultation on the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) and its coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He thanked participants, particularly representatives from the Ministry of Economy and Finance and from the Ministry of Trade. He took the opportunity to insist on the necessity to have regular consultations between CSOs and the government so as to get a better exchange of information on the work being done by both sides and build a close alliance to defend the interests of Senegal.

These representatives made brief remarks to thank LDC Watch and ARCADE for the invitation and the opportunity to share their experiences with civil society organizations on policies being implemented by the government in connection with the IPoA and the SDGs.

### II) Presentations

Two presentations were made by Ms. Henriette Faye and Mr. Dembele, both from ARCADE and LDC Watch.



### **A) Ms. Henriette Faye's Presentation**

Her presentation focused on the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) and its coherence with the SDGs. She began by explaining the origins of the LDC category, as set by the ECOSOC in 1971. She then exposed the main criteria that make a country an LDC. She went on to give a brief overview of the previous three UN Conferences on LDCs, from 1981 in Paris (France) to 2001 in Brussels (Belgium). All the programs of action adopted during these Conferences have either failed as illustrated by the growing number of LDCs, from 24 in 1981 to 47 now, almost double the number of 1981. Of the 47 LDCs, 34 are in Africa. Since 1981, only five (5) countries have graduated: Botswana; Cape Verde; Maldives; Samoa, and Equatorial Guinea. Other countries may graduate before 2020, among them Angola, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. The Senegal case will be reexamined this year and the ECOSOC will make a decision after that process.

It is against the background of the failure of the previous programs of action that the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs (UN LDC-IV) was held in Istanbul (Turkey) in May 2011. It adopted a more ambitious agenda for the LDCs, with the aim of graduating half of the LDCs by 2020.

#### **1) Objectives of the IPoA**

She then exposed the objectives of the Istanbul Program of Action. This Program is the fourth since 1981. It followed the Paris Programs of Action (1981 and 1991) and the Brussels Program of Action (2001).

The Istanbul Program of Action seems to be more ambitious than the previous ones since its main goal is to cut by half the number of LDCs, by 2020. The IPoA made a global assessment of the Brussels Program of Action (BPoA). It highlighted its weaknesses in the implementation, in particular its impact on structural transformation, job creation and LDCs' role in global trade. The IPoA called for more and new mechanisms of support for the LDCs. It outlined a new path to development for LDCs for the 2011-2020 decade and proposed eight (8) priority areas.

However, the IPoA does not propose a change in paradigm. This is one of the reasons why LDC Watch and CSOs, which were present in Istanbul, strongly criticized the IPoA in the Declaration issued at the end of the CSO Forum. One area where the IPoA may be different from previous Programs is the recognition of the important role of South-South cooperation in the new global context. This cooperation is viewed as a solidarity partnership based on the respect for national sovereignty, responsibility and transparency. Another key feature of the IPoA is the need to organize biannual and mid-term reviews on the implementation of the agenda.

#### **2) The Mid-Term Review in Antalya (Turkey)**

It was organized by the United Nations in May 2016 in Turkey, with the aim of assessing the implementation of the IPoA, examining its shortcomings and seeking ways of remobilizing all stakeholders to get more progress by 2020. In fact, mid-way through its implementation, the IPoA had made little progress toward fulfilling its main goal of cutting LDCs by half. The main critique came from the successful Civil Society Forum, organized by LDC Watch. Also, LDC government



representatives acknowledged that their countries have not been able to achieve meaningful progress in several of the 8 priority areas of the IPoA.

One of the reasons for the lack of progress is that many countries are lagging behind in terms of economic growth, unemployment, food security, domestic resource mobilization, social development, good governance, etc. For instance, due to the fall in commodity prices, very few countries have achieved growth rates of 7% or more, needed to get on the path to graduation. As a result, LDCs' trade deficit widened, which means the need for more external assistance to close the gap in their budgets. In the agricultural sector, food production is still at low levels and many LDCs are net food importers. Therefore, poor economic performance and shortage of financial resources explain why there is little progress in terms of poverty eradication in many LDCs.

On gender issues, there is still a long way to go in many countries to fulfill the goals set in the IPoA. All in all, like previous Programs, the IPoA is not likely to fulfill its promises. In the next four years, it is very unlikely to see more than 10 countries graduate from the LDC category.

### **3) The SDGs**

The presenter first refreshed the participants' memory about the SDGs. Then, she examined the coherence between the objectives of the IPoA and the SDGs. She observed that the LDCs are a target for the SDGs and the IPoA as well. To illustrate, she indicated that the SDGs, like the IPoA, through its 8 priority areas, include the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, as well as poverty eradication. Another similarity is that while the SDGs aim to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030, the IPoA aims to cut the number of LDCs by half by 2020.

Furthermore, the second SDG (zero hunger) with the doubling of agricultural productivity and farmers' income by 2030 is similar to the first and second priority areas of the IPoA (enhancing productive capacity and ensuring food security) which also aim to double production and eradicate hunger.

In conclusion, she said that the SDGs are a global approach to achieving sustainable development. For LDCs to benefit from their implementation, there should be synergy and coherence with the IPoA.

### **B) Mister Dembele's Presentation**

He reminded that the general framework of economic and social policies in Senegal since 2014 is the so-called Plan Senegal Emergent. In its implementation, the government attempted to be in coherence with the objectives of the IPoA and the SDGs. The presenter examined how this was done in each of the 8 priority areas of the IPOA and the targets of the SDGs.

In fact, there has been some progress in areas, like the agricultural sector, economic growth, health, food production, access to drinking water, gender, and so forth. On gender issues, Senegal has made advances with the adoption of the Law on Parity during national and local elections. It means that

electoral lists must be composed of an equal number of men and women. Also, women have now the right to give Senegalese nationality to their non-Senegalese husbands.

On growth, the government has claimed rates of 5% and more since 2015. In 2016 and 2017, it claimed 6.5% and 7.2% growth, respectively. But prominent economists and the private sector are skeptical about these rates. One of the reasons is that the growth rates claimed by the government have had little impact in terms of job creation and stimulus for the private sector.

In the area of science, technology and innovation, Senegal has made great efforts during the last few years. For the Senegalese government, digital is a great opportunity to be seized because of its potential for several sectors, such as telecommunications, information and communication technologies (ICT).

In the area of food production, there has been a tremendous boost to rice production since 2014. The government was optimistic that it would achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2017 but this did not happen. The target year is now 2019, or 2020. In all other areas, food production has declined or stagnated. As a result, Senegal is far from achieving food security.

On trade, Senegal still depends on a few commodities for its exportations, like gold, oil products, peanut products, fertilizers. The exploitation of oil and gas in the next few years is likely to accentuate Senegal's dependency on commodities for its exports.

On human development, the government has a very weak, even poor, record. Whether in the area of education, primary health care, youth development, there has been little progress. Youth faces two main hurdles: education and employment. The education and training sector is in deep crisis, which has had an impact on the quality of education. Youth unemployment is such a headache to the point of being dubbed "social bomb" by an adviser to the Prime Minister.

One area where the government claims to have made significant progress is access to drinking water. In urban areas, access to drinking water increased from 81,0% in 2000 to 99,6% in 2014. In rural areas, the rate went from 59,0% to 85%, during the same period. However, these statistics do not seem to correspond to reality on the ground. In many neighborhoods of the capital, Dakar, there are recurrent water shortages. In rural areas, access to water is the main concern for many populations. In addition, the quality of water has been a subject of concern even in urban areas.

On sanitation, no significant progress has been observed

On social protection, the government has put in place since 2013 a program called universal health coverage to guarantee access to a minimum package of health care. The number of population covered has increased over the years. This year, the coverage should involve 70% of the population. However, the program has been plagued by delays in payments and other bureaucratic problems. Another program initiated by the government for vulnerable groups is to allocate to each poor family an amount of 100.000 CFA (150 euros) a year. But this has very little impact on poverty since it has increased from 6.3 million in 2011 to 6.8 million in 2016.



On resource mobilization, the IPoA recommends improvement in institutional capacities, the increase in domestic savings and fiscal revenues. In Senegal, there has been modernization of the tax administration, the reform of the General Taxation Code and Customs procedures. These measures helped to boost tax revenues and led to a greater domestic resource mobilization. Now, the Senegalese government plans to achieve “budget sovereignty” within the next five (5) years. I guess this means that it would no longer need “budgetary help” from its partners.

On development assistance, the IPoA suggests that it should increase for the LDCs and be aligned on these countries’ national priorities. ODA is now delivered according to the principles of the partnership for development effectiveness, from the Paris Agreement in 2005 to the Busan Agreement in 2011.

Finally on good governance, several institutions have been set but are empty shells. In reality, for African governments, “good governance” is mostly for their partners, not for their own citizens. For instance, Senegal improved its ranking in the Mo Ibrahim Index, becoming one of the “best performers” in this Index. Yet, this did not translate into better governance inside the country. New anti-corruption institutions have been set up and others have seen their powers extended. In addition, Senegal has a Ministry of Good Governance, there is a Law requiring the President and high officials to declare their wealth to an institution called OFNAC (National Office against Corruption and Nepotism). But all this did not translate into a more transparent management of the country’s resources.

In conclusion, like other LDCs, Senegal has a long way to go to achieve most of the objectives included in the IPoA and the SDGs. Specially those goals associated with social development and good governance. This explains, among others, why it has not yet been given the green light for graduation by the UN ECOSOC.

### **III) The Debates**

After the two presentations, the floor was given to the government representatives to get their reactions. The first to react was Mister Mamadou Dia, who is in charge of LDCs at the Ministry of Economy and Finance. He concurred with the first presentation by Ms. Henriette Faye and gave a few statistics to complement those included in the presentation.

Regarding the implementation of the IPoA, as expected, he expressed his reservation over Mister Dembele’s critical assessment of the government’s policies relative to the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action. Mister Dia went on to give statistics and details on what has been done by the government on health, agriculture and good governance. However, he agreed with Mister Dembele that there have been some failures and shortcomings in some critical areas, like social development, food security, education, youth employment. He also agreed that Senegal may not achieve several objectives of the IPoA and therefore, it may not graduate before 2020.

However, he said there was a recent review of the Senegalese case, which took place in New York. He said that a new round of talks will be held between the Senegalese government and the ECOSOC

to assess the situation and determine whether Senegal could be eligible for graduation and when. He said that once this meeting is held, he would share the outcome with ARCADE and its CSO partners.

Then, Mister Bathie Ciss, from the Trade Ministry took the floor to share policies undertaken by his Ministry, based on the IPoA objectives and the SDGs. He evoked the efforts made to help the private sector take advantage of the IPoA on trade issues. For instance, his Ministry has taken special measures to assist Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SMEs) to get market access in the sub-region and even beyond. However, he criticized one segment of the private sector, the traders, who are more interested in protecting their vested interests than to help the national economy.

Other participants welcomed the Consultation. For many of them, it was a learning experience because they were not familiar with the IPoA. So, the meeting gave them the opportunity to better learn about the IPoA and the SDGs. Some speakers said that ARCADE should put together an agenda for Senegalese civil society organizations so that they could participate more effectively in the debate on all these processes in the lead up to the fifth UN Conference on LDCs in 2021.

Others feel that they need capacity-building on these issues, which are not well-known in their circles.

ARCADE welcomed these proposals and recommendations from CSOs. Mister Dembele welcomed proposal from Mister Mamadou Dia, from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, to build closer relationships and work together on the issue of IPoA. This could lead to mutual support in the lead up to the Fifth UN Conference for LDCs (UN-LDC V) in 2021.

#### **IV) Conclusions**

After the debates, ARCADE thanked representatives from the government for their participation, comments and proposals. He reiterated ARCADE's readiness to work with the government with the goal of advancing the interest of Senegal in international fora, especially for the 2021 UN Conference. Demba also accepted proposals made by CSOs to help build capacity on LDC issues so that to familiarize them more with these issues. This could contribute to building a larger and stronger constituency for LDC Watch in Senegal.